### Report on the

# Office of Circuit and District Courts

Dallas County, Alabama
November 1, 2016 through June 30, 2021

Filed: November 18, 2022



# **Department of Examiners of Public Accounts**

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Rachel Laurie Riddle, Chief Examiner



### Rachel Laurie Riddle Chief Examiner

### **State of Alabama**

Department of

### **Examiners of Public Accounts**

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Honorable Rachel Laurie Riddle Chief Examiner of Public Accounts Montgomery, Alabama 36130

#### Dear Madam:

An examination was conducted on the Office of Circuit and District Courts, Dallas County, Alabama, for the period November 1, 2016 through June 30, 2021, by Examiners Stephanie C. Cave, Queneshia Beal and Billy Jones. I, Stephanie C. Cave, served as the Examiner-in-Charge on the engagement, and under the authority of the *Code of Alabama 1975*, Section 41-5A-19, I hereby swear to and submit this report to you on the results of the examination.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephanie C. Cave Examiner of Public Accounts

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# Department of **Examiners of Public Accounts**

### **SUMMARY**

Office of Circuit and District Courts Dallas County, Alabama November 1, 2016 through June 30, 2021

The Office of Circuit and District Courts, Dallas County, Alabama, (hereinafter referred to as the "Courts") receipts, disburses and otherwise accounts for court costs, fines, forfeitures, fiduciary funds and other miscellaneous receipts for cases under the Courts' jurisdiction. The amounts collected are then distributed to various state and local entities as ordered by the Courts and in accordance with state and local laws and regulations. The Circuit Clerk, an elected official, is responsible for overseeing the operations of the Circuit and District Courts. The duties of the Circuit Clerk and District Court Clerk are enumerated in the *Code of Alabama 1975*, Sections 12-17-93 and 12-17-94. The Circuit Clerk also serves as clerk for the District Court pursuant to the *Code of Alabama 1975*, Section 12-17-160.

Honorable Cheryl Strong Ratcliff served as Circuit and District Court Clerk until January 31, 2018. Honorable Christmas Green-Williams served as Circuit and District Court Clerk from February 1, 2018 through August 2, 2018. Honorable Lynnethia R. Bennett served as Circuit and District Court Clerk beginning August 3, 2018 through the remainder of the examination period.

The Circuit and District Court Clerk maintains a special fund known as the Circuit Clerk's Fund that was created pursuant to the *Code of Alabama 1975*, Section 12-17-225.4. The Circuit and District Court Clerk receives twenty-five percent (25%) of a thirty percent (30%) collection fee for any delinquent court ordered payments that are 90 days old and have been collected by the District Attorney. This twenty-five percent of the collection fee is deposited in the Circuit Clerk's Fund and is used for general office operations.

The Circuit and District Court Clerk maintains a special fund known as the Judicial Administration Fund that was created pursuant to the *Code of Alabama 1975*, Section 12-19-310 and 12-19-311. The Circuit and District Court Clerk receives portions of the docket fee and bail bond fee increase provided for by these statutes. This fund is to be used for the support of local court operations and to promote efficient administration of justice.

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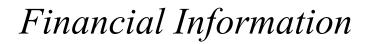
This report presents the results of an examination of the Courts and a review of the Court's compliance with applicable laws and regulations of the State of Alabama in accordance with the requirements of the Department of Examiners of Public Accounts under the authority of the *Code of Alabama 1975*, Section 41-5A-12.

Tests performed during the examination did not disclose any significant instances of noncompliance with applicable state or local laws and regulations.

### **EXIT CONFERENCE**

The officials were invited to an exit conference to discuss the results of the examination. The current Circuit and District Court Clerk, Lynnethia R. Bennett, attended the exit conference. Representing the Department of Examiners of Public Accounts were: Sherry Owen, Audit Manager; and Stephanie C. Cave, Examiner.

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### Summary of Receipts, Disbursements and Balances November 1, 2016 through June 30, 2021

		Civil Division	Criminal Division	Child Support Division	Total
Beginning Cash Balances - November 1, 2016	\$	65,771.26	\$ 125,706.47	\$	\$ 191,477.73
Receipts		6,798,092.98	2,345,651.81	52,929.86	9,196,674.65
Total Available for Disbursement		6,863,864.24	2,471,358.28	52,929.86	9,388,152.38
Disbursements		6,793,095.37	2,330,731.14	52,929.86	9,176,756.37
Ending Cash Balances - June 30, 2021	_ \$	70,768.87	\$ 140,627.14	\$	\$ 211,396.01

# Fiduciary Funds on Hand June 30, 2021

Civil Division		525,555.90
Total	_\$	525,555.90

# Circuit Clerk's Fund Summary of Receipts, Disbursements and Balance November 1, 2016 through June 30, 2021

Receipts		
Restitution Recovery Fees	\$ 23,754.87	
Pretrial Diversion Fees	1,090.37	
Municipal Court Solicitor's Fees	6,479.05	
Copy Fees	18,402.58	
Interest	977.18	
Other	13,801.07	
Total Receipts	64,505.12	_
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<u>Disbursements</u>		
Salaries	42,977.22	
Travel and Conference Expenses	15,386.31	
Office Supplies and Expenses	15,401.88	
Contract Services	44,109.90	
Other	2,302.64	
Total Disbursements	120,177.95	_
Excess of Receipts Over/(Under) Disbursements	(55,672.83	)
Balance - November 1, 2016	108,106.46	_
Balance - June 30, 2021	\$ 52,433.63	

# Circuit Clerk's Judicial Administration Fund Summary of Receipts, Disbursements and Balance November 1, 2016 through June 30, 2021

Receipts \$35 Bail Bond Fee 3.5% Bail Bond Fee Criminal Docket Fees	\$ 38,137.90 19,008.00 27,324.25
Civil Docket Fees	33,327.37
Municipal Docket Fees Other	5,814.25 856.53
Total Receipts	124,468.30
Disbursements Salaries Contract Services Office Supplies and Expenses Total Disbursements	 64,109.43 29,777.12 3,737.37 97,623.92
Excess of Receipts Over/(Under) Disbursements	26,844.38
Balance - November 1, 2016	53,132.37
Balance - June 30, 2021	\$ 79,976.75